

Washenaw County  
**Foster Grandparent Program Advisory Group**  
Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, November 16, 2005 **Time:** 9:00 am

**Meeting Location:** Washtenaw County Michigan Works! Service Center, 304 Harriet Street, Ypsilanti

**Members Present:** Ray Mellberg, Fran Bredow, Helena Dismuke, Rosie Fenderson, Leah Gunn, Jill Kind, Annie Robinson and Hazel Watson

**Members Absent:** Ameen Benin, Margaret Crawford, Jessie Darko, Gina Lewis and Janet Nowland all excused

**Staff Present:** Trenda Rusher, Susan Sweet Scott, Barbara A. Patterson and Rana Al-Igoe

**1. Call to Order**

Mellberg called the meeting to order at 9:06 am. Chair Crawford injured her leg and is unable to attend the meeting.

**2. Welcome and Introductions**

Mellberg welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that everyone introduce him or herself.

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

Kind moved to approve the meeting agenda. Gunn supported. Meeting agenda approved.

**4. Approval of the Minutes**

Gunn moved to approve the minutes from the 09/21/05 meeting. Robinson supported. Minutes from the 09/21/05 meeting approved.

**5. Report of the Executive Director – (Rusher)**

A. Announcements

- Rusher announced that Vickie Page, former Chair of this Group, and employed at Roberto Clemente, passed away earlier this week. She has worked with the FGP Advisory Group for several years.

B. ETCS Updates

- Rusher distributed the updated Report Card. This helps report to the community the strategic planning goals of the Workforce Development Board (WDB) and the Community Action Board (CAB). Most groups that seek funding from the State are required to align their goals with ours.
- One difference in this issue on the Report Card is the “& Beyond” section that deals with aging and wages issues. This is one aspect that will be important to this Group. It will help us align this Advisory Group with the other ETCS boards and the initiatives throughout the County. We may want to spend some quality time going through the report in more detail at a later meeting.

- Group members with questions or who wish to obtain additional copies may contact Rusher or ETCS staff.
- Mellberg thanked staff for the updated Report Card and acknowledged the success section that highlights Foster Grandparents (FGs) who collectively volunteered over 70,000 hours last year.

## 6. Report of the Older Adult Program Activities – (Scott)

### A. Blueprint for Aging

- There has been planning for this Blueprint for many years throughout the County. An implementation grant was written and submitted a couple of weeks ago. The results are expected April. There are many opportunities for people to be involved.
- It was noted how great it is that the FGs meet once a month for training. One thing that has been learned is that seniors do not need others to speak for them about what is important to them. The Blueprint wants to support older adults getting more involved with the community.
- The Blueprint covers issues ranging from transportation to health care. Members want to create a system where more seniors are involved with the discussion of such issues. To do so they are creating a senior advocacy council, called Senior Advocates of Washtenaw (SAW), to speak out and ensure that seniors are involved with the implementation of the Blueprint.
- Bredow asked about the senior advocate meeting on Monday, November 14. Kind replied that seventy people attended that meeting and the interest has been great. In January 2006, a trainer will teach a series of six classes and will provide a manual on how seniors can develop confidence and become more involved.
- Dismuke asked why some of the teachers that have been teaching for a many number of years did not have more of a say in their schools. She also noted that special needs students in her class were pulled from class often and this impedes their ability to learn with the rest of the class. Kind noted that these are important issues and that the senior advocacy council will need to meet to determine what important issues they want to take on. Gunn agreed and noted that part of being a senior is wanting to ensure that grandchildren are cared for. Kind pointed out that seniors can have a positive impact on the school system if they advocate together.
- Scott noted that monitors from the funding source might be contacting FGP Advisory Group members as part of their two-day visit February 7 and 8, 2006.

## 7. Report of the Foster Grandparent Program

- There are currently twenty-eight (28) sites. Patterson's goal is to complete four visits a week to review.
- There are sixty-nine (69) FGs that are actively volunteering. Recruitment is always ongoing. Scott noted that while ETCS meets the program requirements for the number of volunteers, staff would like to get up to eighty (80) FGs to cover vacations and sick time.
- Scott distributed the results of a survey given to the FGs. Forty-seven (47) FGs responded to the survey and comments were very positive.

## 8. Report of the Foster Grandparents

The FGs discussed some of the issues they face at their sites. One exciting thing coming up is the Kaiser Elementary School Harvest. It is scheduled for 11:30 am on Tuesday, November 22.

**9. Other Business/Announcements**

There was no other business to discuss at this time.

**10. Next Meeting Dates**

All meetings will begin at 9:00 am and will take place at the Washenaw County Michigan Works! Service Center, 304 Harriet Street, Ypsilanti in Room 112 (except where specified).

- Wednesday, January 18, 2006
- Wednesday, March 15, 2006
- Friday, April 28, 2006 – Annual Recognition Luncheon from 11:30 am – 2:00 pm
- Wednesday, May 17, 2006

**11. Adjourn**

Mellberg adjourned the meeting at 10:23 am.